

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 00246 271836Z
ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7478
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 0246

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV RH US UK
SU J: RHODESIA: CONVERSATION WITH MARK CHONA

REF: (A) STATE 19753, (B) STATE 17228

1. I HAD A LONG AND UNUSUALLY FRANK CONVERSATION WITH MARK CHONA THURSDAY THE 27TH. HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM HIS TRIP WITH THE PRESIDENT TO THE COPPERBELT AND PART OF THE CONVERSATION RELATED TO THE INTERNAL POLITICS OF THE LUANYSHA BI-ELECTION.

2. AT HIS REQUEST, I RELATED TO CHONA HOW I THOUGHT WE STOOD ON RHODESIA, DRAWING FROM REF STATE TELS. CHONA STRONGLY CRITICIZED BRITISH FAILURE TO CONDEMN THE SALISBURY TALKS. I REVIEWED OUR POSITION TOWARDS THEM AND QUOTED TO CHONA FROM
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CARVER'S STATEMENTS IN PRETORIA, STRESSING THE NEED TO INCLUDE ALL PARTIES IN A SETTLEMENT. HE ASKED WHETHER THE SALISBURY TALKS WERE NOT A WASTE OF TIME. I REPLIED THAT I THOUGHT GETTING SMITH'S COMMITMENT TO ONE-MAN-ONE-VOTE AT AGE 18 WAS USEFUL. I SAID I PERSONALLY THOUGHT THAT INTRANSIGENCE ON THE PART OF THE PF AND THE IMPRESSION GIVEN TO MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE THAT THEY MIGHT BE FROZEN OUT OF A SETTLEMENT HAD FORCED THEM

INTO SMITH'S HANDS. ONLY THE CONVICTION BY EACH PARTY THAT THEY WILL HAVE A FAIR SHAKE DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD CAN BRING US TO A SETTLEMENT INCLUDING THEM ALL. IF WE PERSIST IN GIVING THEM THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PF WILL HAVE CONTROL DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD, WE WILL FORCE THEM INTO A SETTLEMENT WITH SMITH. I AGREED WITH CHONA THAT THIS WOULD LEAD TO A CONFRONTATION WHICH WE ALL SEEK TO AVOID.

3. CHONA ASKED WHAT THE MAJOR OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS WAS AND WHAT ZAMBIA COULD DO TO HELP. I SAID I THOUGHT THAT AN INDICATION TO THE PF THAT A SETTLEMENT MUST LEAVE POWER WITH THE BRITISH DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD AND NO ADVANTAGE TO ANY NATIONALIST GROUP COULD HELP US MOVE ACROSS THIS MAJOR HURDLE. CHONA'S REPLY WAS THAT ZAMBIA MUST FOLLOW THE PF'S LEAD ON THIS. IF WE COULD CONVINCE THE PF, MORE POWER TO US, BUT ZAMBIA WOULD NOT TRY. I NOTED THAT MOZAMBIQUE, TANZANIA AND BOTSWAA HAD ALL INDICATED DIFFERENT VIEWS FROM THOSE OF THE PF AND THAT ZAMBIA'S ECONOMY AND ZAMBIA'S TERRITORY WERE LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED IN WHAT MIGHT FOLLOW A BREAKDOWN OF OUR PROPOSALS. IT HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO ITS OWN INTEREST. CHONA SAID THAT ZAMBIA HAD ITS OWN PRIVATE VIEWS BUT COULD NOT EXPRESS THEM WHEN THEY DIFFERED FROM THE PF. IF THE MAJORITY OF THE FL DID SO, WE SHOULD TAKE THAT AS THE FL POSITION. FOR THE TIME BEING ZAMBIA WOULD STAY OUT OF THE DEBATE. HE ADVISED US AGAIN TO FOLLOW THE VIEWS OF THE OTHER FL COUNTRIES.

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4. CHONA SAID ZAMBIA WOULD NOT TAKE A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE CURRENT DISCUSSIONS. IT WOULD STAND ASIDE FOR THE TIME BEING AND WATCH MATTERS PROGRESS. HOWEVER, HE SAID WE CAN BE SURE THAT PRESIDENT KAUNDA WILL SUPPORT ANY SOLUTION WHICH OFFERS THE PROSPECT OF PEACE. ZAMBIA WOULD NOT SEND OBSERVERS TO MALTA. CHONA WAS GLAD THAT SERGIO VIEIRA WAS GOING AND URGED US TO CONSULT CLOSELY WITH HIM.

5. COMMENT: CHONA LISTENED MORE CAREFULLY TO WHAT I HAD TO SAY THIS TIME THAN ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS WHEN HIS MIND SEEMED MUCH MORE CLOSED. HIS RESPONSES TRACKED BETTER THAN THEY OFTEN DID IN THE PAST. HE SEEMED TO BE GIVING A SIGNAL THAT ZAMBIA MAY BE IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGING ITS VIEW BUT WE COULD NOT EXPECT IT TO HAPPEN OVERNIGHT. IN THE MEANTIME ZAMBIA WOULD NOT BE DISPLEASED IF WE AND THE OTHER FL COUNTRIES TALKED THE PF OUT OF ITS INTRANSIGENT POSITION.

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